



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

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TO: James L. Connaughton
Chairman
Council on Environmental Quality

Linda M. Springer
Director
Office of Personnel Management

FROM: Mike Johanns
Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mike Johanns", is placed next to the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: Implementation of a Competency-Based Approach to Collaboration and Partnering in Response to Executive Order 13352 (E.O. #13352), "Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation"

This memorandum is in response to your November 28, 2005, request for a report outlining the actions that the Department of Agriculture (USDA) will take to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors necessary to meet the objectives set forth in the President's E.O.#13352 - Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation.

INTRODUCTION:

During the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, participants expressed a desire for Federal agencies to improve organizational cultures to enable them to meet the goals of E.O. #13352 and to join with others in advancing cooperative conservation. Based on this recurring theme, I agreed, through my Chief Human Capital Officer, to support a competency-based approach to developing the necessary collaboration and partnering skills within my Department. These collaboration and partnering skills will allow USDA to maximize the inclusion of local partnerships in achieving conservation objectives that are consistent with our mission and statutory authorities.

The purpose of the E.O. #13352 is to ensure that the Department of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation. E.O. #13352 defines cooperative conservation as "actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals." At least three agencies within USDA are engaged in actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural

resources and protection of the environment: the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Forest Service (FS) and Farm Service Agency. Of these three agencies, NRCS and FS conservation agencies implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participants in Federal decisionmaking. While these two agencies have many cooperative conservation success stories to their credit, they are continuing to develop knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors within their organizations to promote cooperative conservation.

INTERAGENCY EFFORTS:

The Department will work with the other agencies covered by the Executive Order to implement Cooperative Conservation competencies in a consistent manner. Initially, these efforts will focus on the use of these competencies for hiring, training, assessing performance, and rewarding at the Senior Executive Service (SES) and manager level. The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) for SES are based on extensive research of the attributes of successful executives in both the private and public sectors. The 27 leadership competencies incorporated in these core qualifications are a product of collaboration, reflecting the best thinking of many senior executives and associations, as well as agency human resources professionals.

The OPM leadership competencies have been validated for use in hiring, training, rewarding at the SES level, and for training at all levels. Some additional validation is required for use at the manager level. Validation entails the use of recognized experts from the public and private sectors to verify that a competency statement is an accurate description of the skills and behaviors necessary for successful performance in a particular position. This level makes sense for working across agencies because of the similar nature of the positions.

COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION:

The agencies named in the Executive Order collaboratively reviewed the 27 OPM leadership competencies and identified the following as being fundamental to the success of cooperative conservation at various organizational levels:

- Partnering - Develops networks and builds alliances, engages in cross-functional activities; collaborates across boundaries, and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders. Utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases.
- Influencing/Negotiating - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals; facilitates "win-win" situations.
- Interpersonal Skills - Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.

- Creativity and Innovation - Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.
- External Awareness - Identifies and keeps up to date on key national and international policies and economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization. Understands near-term and long-range plans and determines how best to be positioned to achieve a competitive business advantage in a global economy.
- Entrepreneurship - Identifies opportunities to develop and market new products and services within or outside of the organization. Is willing to take risks; initiates actions that involve a deliberate risk to achieve a recognized benefit or advantage.
- Problem Solving - Identifies and analyzes problems; distinguishes between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions; provides solutions to individual and organizational problems.
- Conflict Management - Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner to minimize negative impact.

In order to use these competencies fully for hiring, training, and rewarding, the Office of the Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer will work with counterparts from the other agencies covered by the Executive Order to identify the actions needed to validate competencies for hiring and rewarding below the SES level, at the manager level, and determine how to best leverage resources across agencies.

FS and NRCS each have distinct human policies and individualized strategies for implementing E.O. #13352. What follows are three sections – one for each of the two agencies – that discuss current efforts, long-term strategies, and the next steps being taken to further develop the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors necessary to meet the objectives set forth in the E.O. #13352.

FS CURRENT EFFORTS:

Competency-Based Human Resources System

FS has a Strategic Workforce Plan that guides recruitment, hiring, training multicultural initiatives, succession planning and human resource priorities. It links to the FS Strategic Plan and Human Capital Management Plan. The Strategic Workforce Plan includes critical competencies for professional, administrative, technical, and clerical positions. FS uses the OPM Leadership Competencies as the foundation for a competency-based Human Resources system.

FS participated with OPM to validate competencies for scientific and engineering positions in 2002. The study included FS major occupations. FS has validated the OPM competencies to meet the agency needs and will emphasize the cooperative conservation competencies within the existing OPM competencies. Collaboration and partnership skills are factored into selections for line officer and senior-level staff positions. FS is working to integrate competencies, including those associated with cooperative conservation, into AgLearn, USDA's new learning management system. This will allow employees and their supervisors to assess and close individual competency gaps. It will also allow the agency to dynamically measure and work to correct competency gaps in its workforce.

Cooperative Conservation Competencies

FS currently selects candidates for GS-14 and GS-15 Forest Supervisor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, and staff positions using the executive core qualifications for senior executive service¹. These same competencies are recommended for and widely used in recruitment and selection of District Ranger and Deputy Regional Forester positions. Accordingly, FS line officers at all levels of the organization are hired for skills and behaviors that include those detailed in the cooperative conservation-related competencies described above.

In addition, the FS evaluates candidates for all staff positions at grades GS-14 and GS-15 using the executive core qualifications for senior executive service, which include all of the leadership competencies which are the basis for success in cooperative conservation.

Transition Management

Often, collaborative work is a combination of formal and informal working agreements and commitments between various participants. Agency personnel changes can pose a challenge to the continuity of these agreements. The Collaboration Action Team, a national-level group of governmental and non-governmental organizations, recommended to FS's National Leadership Team that a "handover memo" be created. Recognizing the need for improved transitions between outgoing leaders and incoming leaders who will assume the responsibility for working directly with the public and partners, the agency adopted the use of this memo. The handover memo is designed to contain information about relationships with partners, collaborative efforts underway, any commitments that have been made and any work agreements or procedures that partners are using with the agency/unit. The memo is to be completed by the outgoing leader prior to departure and addressed to the incoming leader.

¹ Forest Service administrative units consist of regions, national forests and grasslands, and ranger districts. Forest Service regions are a collection of national forests, which in turn are a collection of ranger districts. The administrators of these units are Regional Foresters, Forest Supervisors, and District Rangers respectively. Regional Foresters are senior executive service and, therefore, subject to the Executive Core Qualifications. Deputy Regional Foresters are GS-15. Forest Supervisors are either GS-14 or GS-15 depending upon program complexity. District Rangers are either GS-12 or GS-13 depending upon program complexity.

National Partnership Office

FS's National Partnership Office exists to help increase the agency's effectiveness in partnership and collaboration with citizens, communities, and organizations. Created in 2003, the office develops and disseminates partnership tools, builds national networks, provides inter-, and intra-agency coordination and helps build employee and partner capacity for working together.

Partnership Coordinators

All of the FS regions, research stations and the Northeast Area State and Private Forestry office have either a partnership coordinator or a contact person for their partnership work and programs. Coordinators serve as a point of contact for employees and partners and provide strategies, tools and training for strengthening partnerships at the field level.

Tools and Training

- Through a joint venture of the FS and the National Forest Foundation, partnership resources are available online at the Partnership Resource Center (<http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/training/index.php>), a clearinghouse of information and tools to help partners and FS employees initiate, learn about, or work with partnerships. Links to training resources for collaboration and partnerships are also provided on the Partnership Resource Center website.
- Partnership Assessment Tool – This tool provides an easy to use method for analyzing the skills, abilities, resources as well as gaps for carrying out field-level partnership work.
- Partnership Guide – This on-line guide provides everything from partnership philosophy to the successful execution of partnerships in the FS and is geared to both employees and partners.
- Project Implementation Tool – This tool provides a simple process for determining the appropriate authorities and instruments for implementing a partnership project.
- New policies to clarify and streamline partnership business practices (i.e., agreement templates)
- FS course “Leadership Skills for Experienced Managers and Supervisors” - a standard part of the FS leadership development curriculum - includes a collaboration module. The module, updated in FY 2005, ensures that leaders understand that they are expected to have partnership competencies and gives them an opportunity to gain or sharpen skills in this area. (Partnering is one of the competencies identified by the FS as critical for future leaders to gain in its Leadership Success Program. This course is only one of many offered by the FS that helps build partnership related competencies.)

Chief's Partnership Award

This award recognizes FS individuals, work units, or partnerships that have demonstrated excellence in partnership approaches to achieving mutual goals. Individual award recipients receive a cash award and plaque. Work group award recipients will receive a grant and plaque.

FS LONG TERM STRATEGY:

This section describes what the agency is planning to accomplish over the next five years to implement E.O. #13352.

FS to: 1) Institutionalize collaborative processes and the use of partnerships in conducting FS business; 2) Build internal and external capacity by identifying, assisting and encouraging potential and existing partnership leaders; and 3) Cultivate an organizational culture that values collaboration and partnership.

Hiring

FS will continue to select its line officers based on the executive core qualifications. These qualifications include all of the partnership and collaboration competencies identified by the interagency team. FS also will continually monitor and update the content of its Workforce Plan to ensure a continuation of the agency's strong focus on partnership and collaboration competencies into the future.

Training

Within the next two years, AgLearn – the Department's learning management system - will be capable of creating competency-based individual development plans. This will allow cooperative conservation competencies necessary for effective collaboration in conservation projects to be reflected in employee training programs. The agency also will link existing courses to specific cooperative conservation competencies, so that employees will be able to quickly identify which courses will help them address which competencies.

Rewarding

Beginning in FY 2007, USDA will implement a new five-level performance appraisal system. This new appraisal system will include updated performance elements for all FS personnel (exclusive of SES). One of these new performance elements addresses teamwork and partnership. This element will be used in rating all managers and supervisors. Since the new system is designed to reestablish the link between pay and performance, it will increase the incentive for FS employees to engage in partnership competencies. These new elements will facilitate accountability and rewarding of cooperative conservation behaviors.

FS NEXT STEPS:

This section describes how the FS is going to close the gap between its long-term strategy and current efforts, over the next 12 months.

Competency-Based Human Resources System

By the end of the calendar year, online and traditional classroom courses will be created associated with competencies, so that employees will be able to quickly and efficiently enroll in the courses which best address their individual competency gaps. FS is working with USDA in developing the capability of AgLearn to measure competency gaps and track progress in closing them. Work is also proceeding on the ability to create competency-based individual development plans within AgLearn. These efforts are expected to span the next 12 months.

The Chief of FS will re-issue the 1999 policy memo requiring that ECQs be used for hiring GS-14 and GS-15 staff and recommending the ECQs for GS-12 through GS-15 line officers. The new memo will emphasize that ECQs include key leadership competencies relevant to the

implementation of E.O. #13352 on cooperative conservation. The memo will add the requirement that the ECQs be used in the selection of all Deputy Regional Foresters and District Rangers.

Performance Standards

FS will implement a new performance appraisal system in October, 2006. The new system will put increased focus on the need for employees to build their partnership competencies. The new system includes performance standards for all of the elements (including Teamwork and Partnership) that will make it simple for supervisors to hold their employees accountable in this area.

Training

FS partnership network identified a need for the development of training for collaboration, partnership formation, grants and agreements, as well as working with volunteers. These “101” training modules are scheduled to be developed and delivered within the next twelve months to all field-level personnel. In addition to formal training, the Forest Service plans to expand opportunities for experiential training in partnerships and collaboration.

Collaboration and partnership training courses, currently identified on the Partnership Resource Center (PRC) website will be moved into AgLearn. In so doing, these training courses will be correlated to the competencies they address. The PRC website catalogs over 100 training courses, available through federal and state agencies as well as through universities and private contractors.

Regional Partnership Coordinators – A standardized job description will be established for field-level partnership coordinators. The job description will detail the coordinator’s responsibility to oversee partnership work and programs and to ensure attainment of partnership goals. FS National Partnership Office will coordinate an assessment of need for additional staffing resources to provide leadership and consistency in field-level partnership activities. The estimated completion date for both efforts is December, 2006.

Chief’s Cooperative Conservation Award

A new chief’s award category has been proposed, to recognize groups working together to seek solutions with broad support for managing the nation’s public and/or private forests and grasslands. This new category will be the Chief’s Cooperative Conservation Award. Individual award recipients will receive a cash award and plaque. Work group award recipients will receive a grant and plaque.

FS Partnership Enhancement Act of 2005

This proposed bill would improve the agency’s ability to work with a wide variety of cooperators by expanding, clarifying, and simplifying legal authority to enter into mutual benefit agreements. If enacted, this law also requires regulations for implementation.

Measuring Partnership Effectiveness

With a growing federal emphasis on partnerships and cooperative efforts, and in the context of current efforts to ensure accountability, it is critical that the FS understands the effectiveness and relevance of its partnership efforts. To address these needs, the National Partnership Office convened a group of social scientists in November 2005 in Portland, Oregon and developed a two-year timeframe for identifying integrated research questions and approaches to examine the relevance and effectiveness of FS partnerships.

This understanding can inform policy decisions, allocation of resources, and other actions to support partnerships and enhance accountability. Though the FS has developed a quantitative Performance Accountability System, there is a recognized need to develop more in-depth understanding of partnership relevance using social science methodologies.

For additional information concerning Forest Service implementation of E.O. #13352, contact Dave Sire at (202) 205-1006 or Debra Whitall at (202) 205-0967.

NRCS LONG TERM STRATEGY:

Cooperative Conservation

NRCS has taken several steps to move towards implementing approaches that are consistent with the intent of E.O. #13352 - Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation. The following are some examples of current efforts at NRCS:

- In the agency strategic plan, NRCS describes the long-term goals of the agency, the objectives the agency plans to achieve in 2005-2010, and the strategies that have been adopted to ensure that objectives are achieved. In this strategic plan, NRCS has included Cooperative Conservation as one of three overarching strategies for enabling the Agency to help the American public be good stewards of the land. Cooperative Conservation is linked to the other two strategies (Watershed Approach and Market-Based Approach) and the three overarching strategies serve as catalysts for the agency exploring new and currently creative ways to achieve agency mission and goals. The agency strategic plan is currently in the clearance process. The Cooperative Conservation Strategy is further described in the Long Term Strategies section of this memorandum.
- NRCS is in the process of developing a comprehensive Human Capital Strategic Plan (HCSP) integrated with the agency strategic plan that will provide direction in human capital for the next five years. To create buy-in for the plan, NRCS is using a participatory approach that includes representation from all levels and functional areas in the Agency. The agency engaged conservation partners in this process by soliciting their input and feedback on the approach, key issues, and proposed strategies. NRCS administered a web-based human capital survey in December 2005 to solicit input from employees on issues impacting the workforce. Survey results were analyzed and presented during the National Leadership Team (NLT) meeting held in January 2006. A substantial portion of the NLT agenda was devoted to human capital, including how the NRCS works with partners. Breakout sessions were held during the NLT meeting to give leadership the opportunity to brainstorm ideas and solutions for addressing the survey

results and key issues as input into the HCSP. A Core Design Team continues to craft the HCSP, incorporating feedback from the different sources. The HCSP follows the Agency Strategic Plan and address the manner NRCS will deal with such issues as Cooperative Conservation and Energy.

- On October 24, 2005 the Agency announced the Agricultural Conservation Enrollees/Seniors (ACES) pilot project with the National Older Worker Career Center (NOWCC) to obtain the services of experienced workers on a temporary basis. This cooperative partnership allows experienced older workers to support NRCS employees to meet high conservation workload demands and enables producers to receive the conservation assistance they need. ACES workers will help NRCS employees with survey, design, installation, checkout and follow-up for NRCS programs; develop materials for agricultural air quality issues; and process data for Farm Bill program ranking, tracking and payments. The ACES pilot is underway in Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, Mississippi, Utah and Virginia, as well as the NRCS West National Technology Support Center in Portland, Ore., and NRCS national headquarters in

Washington, D.C. Working through NOWCC, about half of the 36 positions identified for the pilot have been filled. ACES evolved from and complements, the Technical Service Provider initiative to expand conservation technical assistance capacity on private lands and help landowners meet conservation goals.

- NRCS developed an award program titled *Excellence in Conservation Award in 2005* to recognize the valuable contributions that partners external to the Federal government make to conserve natural resources on private land. Any non-federal individual, group, tribe or organization can be nominated by a NRCS employee. One recipient will be selected annually based on the results/ benefits of significant contributions in conservation and how the contributions were made including criteria in areas such as: communications, program delivery, technology transfer, outreach, collaboration, and/or any combination of the above.

Competency-Based Approaches

Hiring

The recruitment and selection process for hiring employees into the Senior Executive Service is based on competencies described in the EC's.

Training & Development

NRCS has a Succession Plan that includes programs for Executive Development for SES and leadership development for new and existing supervisors. The Agency has updated the Supervising for Excellence Course, which is designed to provide guidance to a new supervisor, as the first step toward leadership. Participants will receive an overview of skills and characteristics for today's leader. These skills include those related to leadership, effective communication, employee development, relationship building, and working collaboratively with partners and customers. The Supervising for Excellence Course was piloted in February 2006.

Fourteen classes are planned for FY 2006. This training will assist in the agency's development of future managers and leaders.

NRCS established a National Conservation "Boot Camp" program in 2004. The purpose of the "Boot Camp" is to provide new employees with basic training in conservation planning, application, and technical skills within their first year of employment, as an avenue to learn technical, administrative, and implementation skills to perform at an entry level position. This training is provided as a National Course with both technical and soft skill applications for new employees to gain a broad perspective of the agency's mission in a six week period and for new employees to gain an understanding of how they fit into the agency and what is expected from them. Skills for partnership building and working collaboratively in the completion of conservation projects/ initiatives have been included in the program.

Performance Management—Individual

All SES members (100%) have FY 2006 performance plans in place that link to the strategic goals of the agency in the Mission Results critical element.

NRCS issued a new performance management policy on December 15, 2005. The policy required that at least one performance element relate to mission results that "cascade" down from higher levels. NRCS implemented a new 5-tier performance management system for all employees below SES effective on December 15, 2005. The new system is designed to differentiate between performance levels, and provide consequences for poor performance. All supervisors, managers, and executives will be rated on managing their subordinate's performance. Employees will be rated under the new system at the end of FY 2006, with awards given based on ratings. Criteria for awarding employees based on performance ratings were developed in the 2nd quarter of FY 2006. Criteria includes teamwork and working collaboratively with partners. Information on the performance policy was distributed to all employees on December 10, 2005. Demonstrated results are expected to occur in FY 2007.

NRCS LONG TERM STRATEGY:

Cooperative Conservation Strategy

The Cooperative Conservation Strategy (CCS) describes the overarching strategy for promoting cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on inclusion of local participation in decision making, in accordance with mission, policies, and regulations. NRCS developed the following goals with input and advice from partners and stakeholders. The CCS involves two sets of activities:

1) Improving Cooperative Conservation

We believe that enduring conservation is achieved only by the cooperative efforts of individuals, agencies, and organizations across the Nation. For 70 years, NRCS has worked cooperatively with its partners to help people get conservation on the land.

NRCS, conservation districts, State conservation agencies, and Resource Conservation and Development councils represent a unique Federal, State, and local partnership dedicated to

natural resource conservation. The one-on-one assistance this partnership provides to farmers and ranchers forms a foundation for cooperative conservation. Known and trusted by landowners and officials at the local level, we are able to facilitate locally led conservation efforts that meet local goals and serve the broader national interest.

Today, there is growing appreciation for the effectiveness of cooperative approaches to conserve and protect natural resources. We will use our experience and network of partnerships to reach new partners and open channels of communication among stakeholders at all levels.

Increasing our cooperative conservation efforts will require that we strengthen certain agency business lines and human capital development efforts.

- We will increase our investment in developing the resource information and analytical and planning tools that cooperating agencies and organizations, State and local governments, and Tribes can use to reach consensus on natural resource goals and take action to achieve their goals.
- We will expand our efforts to broaden the conservation partnership and build new alliances with our conservation partners to improve communication and develop strategies to make our joint actions more efficient.
- We will enable strong local conservation leadership, working with partners who have responsibility for state and local long-range planning, in Nation-to-Nation relationships with Tribes, and with local organizations that have a stake in natural resource conservation.
- We will improve the quality of cooperative conservation programs and initiatives by playing a more proactive role in providing technical advice in decision-making arenas at all levels.
- We will commit the resources needed to enable staff to develop necessary skills to serve as catalysts and coordinators at the local level. Cooperative conservation – building coalitions – requires a substantial investment of staff time to work with stakeholders to define conditions, foster communication among all parties, and inform people on the issues and options.
- We will improve skills required to facilitate cooperative conservation activities through hiring and employee development and will reward employees for achievements in cooperative ventures.
- We will collaborate with Federal departments and agencies and others with natural resource management responsibilities to coordinate program development and delivery, and to accelerate cooperative conservation at the local level.
- We will pursue partnerships with varied interests, from agencies to industry and environmental groups, to strengthen and collaborate in research efforts and to encourage pilot efforts to address new areas of resource concern, such as air quality, invasive species, and

2) Using Competency-Based Approaches

NRCS will use competency models for leaders and mission critical occupations in recruiting, hiring, training, development, performance, and reward practices as follows:

- **Hiring**

NRCS will identify, construct, and validate competency models to ensure that collaboration, and partnering are included. The Agency will ensure that these competencies are incorporated into existing position descriptions and included in new position descriptions for the recruitment and selection of employees in leadership and mission critical positions. NRCS will validate the effectiveness of competency models by conducting pilots of targeted mission critical occupations that have opportunities for substantial interaction with partners.

- **Training & Development**

NRCS will ensure that training programs for employees at all levels include Cooperative Conservation competencies. Leadership programs will include sessions devoted to collaboration and partnerships to ensure that they are able to demonstrate and model these competencies.

- **Performance**

NRCS will ensure that performance standards for employees engaged in cooperative conservation align with competency models that include collaboration and partnership as core competency and that employees are measured against these standards.

- **Rewards**

NRCS will ensure that reward programs include criteria that will enable managers to reward employees who successfully demonstrate conservation achievements that result from meaningful engagement with customers, landowners, non-profits, businesses, and state and local government.

NRCS NEXT STEPS:

During the next twelve months, we will take specific steps towards achieving our long-term strategy for implementing collaboration and partnering competencies.

Competency-Based Approaches

Strategies in the HCSP that have been identified as priorities for the next 12 months include construction and implementation of competency models for leaders and mission critical occupations. NRCS identified the following mission critical occupations: human resource management (201), general biology (401), soil conservation (457), agronomy (471), agricultural engineering (890), ecology (408), and rangeland management (454). Human resource professionals working with senior leadership will identify individuals in the Agency who excel in leading conservation efforts collaboratively for the purpose of constructing competency models. NRCS will use the competency models in recruiting, hiring, training, development, performance, and reward practices as follows:

For additional information concerning NRCS implementation of E.O. #13352, contact Kevin Brown at (202) 720-6297, Pamela Boyland at (202) 720-6526, or Cynthia Davis at (202) 690-0858.

USDA's NEXT STEPS:

As an outgrowth of the Human Capital Plan, The Department of the Interior formed its 4C's Partnerships and Collaborative Action Team comprised of headquarters and field representatives from the Interior. This team served as a focal point for actions to build capacity for partnering and collaboration within Interior. USDA's FS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were also part of the initial team.

As time passed and the team matured, other federal agencies saw the benefit of being part of a cross-agency team focused on enhancing the capacity across government for developing and maintaining partnerships and engaging in collaborative activities. Recently, the team has been transformed by the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation into a group that represents all five agencies covered by the Executive Order and is called the Interagency Cooperative Conservation Team, continuing its work advancing cooperative conservation.

Together with the Chief Human Capital Officers from the other agencies covered by the Executive Order, the Department's Chief Human Capital Officer will work with OPM and OMB to ensure that "Proud to Be" and Human Capital Scorecard requirements are aligned with the Executive Order to leverage human capital activities.

cc: Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment
Dale Bosworth, Chief, Forest Service
Bruce Knight, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Peter J. Thomas, Chief Human Capital Officer